IN YOUR MAGAZINE: **Colorful Stickers** **Pretty Posters**

American Girl

September/October 2016

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Take a superhero quiz!

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This illustrated girl was drawn to look like our cover model!

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BOOM

American Girl

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loves cotton candy

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dressed up as a toothbrush one Halloween

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The National Magazine Awards Finalist

American Girl®

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HELLO, FRIEND!

Welcome to our new-look issue! Throughout your American Girl magazine, you'll find all the same stories you love, wrapped up in a fresh design to show off our style. It's kind of like when you get new clothes for a new school year—you're still the same great girl, just wearing a cool new shirt to celebrate.

What do you think about our changes? I'd love to hear your thoughts. Send me a note at the address below, and enjoy your new magazine!

Barbara

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Write to Us!

BE SURE TO INCLUDE

- First and last name
- Address and phone number
- Birth date, including year
- School photo or other portrait
- Parent's signature

SNAIL MAIL

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address and the section of the magazine you're writing to on the back.

OR CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

AMERICANGIRL.COM/PLAY/MAGAZINE



we can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon!



ENVELOPE ART BY
Claire K.
Age 12, Michigan

Safety first!
Some of our projects and activities require an adult's help.
When you see this symbol, be sure to ask an adult to work with you.

Girls EXPRESS™

FOR & BY GIRLS!

Crafty Cactus

Decorate rocks to look like little cacti.

Coat several oval-shaped rocks in different shades of nontoxic green paint. Let dry. Use a small paintbrush to decorate each rock with white dots or dashes. Let dry.

Fill a small flower pot with little rocks and prop up your cacti in the rocks. Use glue dots to attach little pink paper flowers to your cacti (found at your local craft store).

Cover your work space.

AG POLL



Answer these questions to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.



What does your favorite notebook look like?

- **39%** It has a cool design on it
- **25%** It's sparkly/shiny
- **21%** It's a bright color
- **15%** It's covered with doodles



What's your favorite kind of gift?

- **43%** a surprise
- **22%** one bought from a cool store
- **18%** a cool experience
- **17%** one made by a friend



What do you like to do in your free time?

- **29%** watch TV/movies
- **26%** make cute crafts
- **26%** hang out with friends
- **19%** play outside

TRUE STORY

Catherine and her family found a piglet in the snow!



Dear American Girl,

I've always loved animals. Last winter, my family was driving along a country road after a long day of skiing. It was snowing hard. All I could think of was a hot bath and bed. Then my dad said, "Hey, wait a second."

He stopped and backed the car up. I looked out the window and saw something pink in a snowbank. My brother and I got out. We brushed snow off the tiny shivering lump. It was a little piglet. Ice covered his ears. I was scared for him.

We wrapped him up in my sweatshirt and put him in the car. We tried to find the farm he might have come from, but no one seemed to be missing a baby pig. We wondered if he had fallen off a truck on its way somewhere.

Back at our hotel, he slurped water and gobbled a banana. He seemed to feel better. My brother and I took turns sleeping with him in the tub. He was a real snuggle bunny. In the morning, we researched places that might give him a home. We named him Wee Wee.

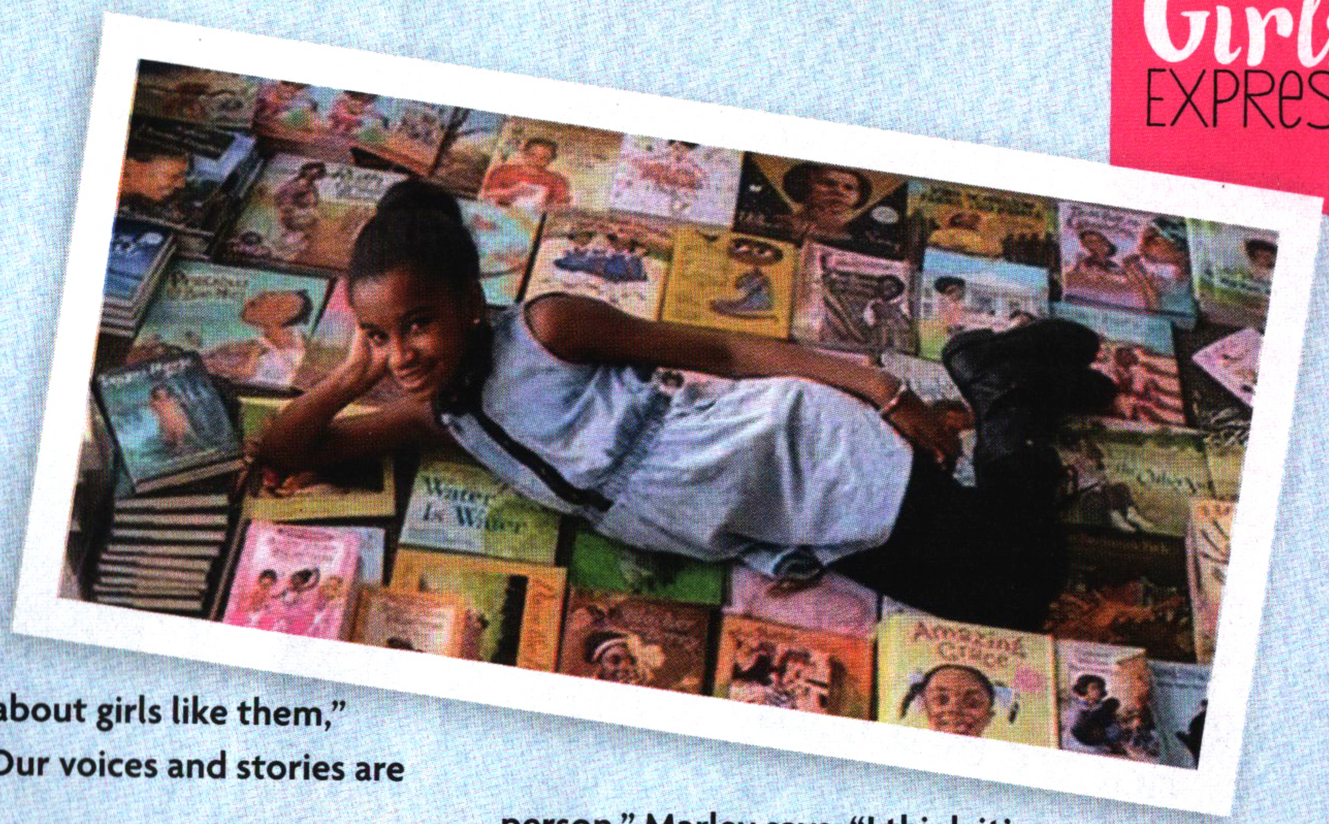
Eventually the roads cleared after the blizzard and we drove home. We had found an animal sanctuary that would take him and treat him like family. At this place, even the ducks have names. When we arrived, he shoved his nose into a bowl of piggy chow. He got a teddy bear and a special bed. Now he has a best friend named Scooter who shares his pen. Some days, they wear cute matching sweaters. I was sad to leave Wee Wee, but I think he's happy in his forever home. It's pretty much the best place ever.

Sincerely,
Catherine S.
Age 12, Maryland





SHINING Star



Photograph: Andrea Cipriani Mecchi

Marley D. noticed that something major was missing from the books she was reading in school. "I wasn't seeing girls like me—black girls who are smart," she says. In fact, most of the stories her class was reading in school didn't feature any characters at all who were black. "The ones that did were very one-dimensional. Black girls are not being portrayed fully," Marley explains.

So the 11-year-old New Jersey girl set out to collect 1,000 amazing stories featuring black girls. "Black girls need to see stories about girls like them," Marley says. "Our voices and stories are so important."

She created the hashtag #1000blackgirlbooks, and her book drive took off. Marley began receiving books from people all over the world. She has collected more than 7,000 books of many different genres and was asked to speak on several big talk shows. "People were surprised because I'm 11. But they were also proud of me," she explains.

Marley decided to donate the books to a school in Jamaica, where her mom is from. "We delivered the books in person," Marley says. "I think it's important to step out of your comfort zone." Marley is still collecting books and speaking about the importance of black female characters. "You don't have to be the best," she says. "You just have to do your best and do what you love."

You can SHINE, too!

Have you noticed certain types of books missing from your library shelves? Talk to your school librarian about starting a book drive or raising money for more books!

AG ART GALLERY

Our readers created beautiful scenes.





Kassie C.
Age 14, Pennsylvania





Zoey M.
Age 11, Texas

Ava B.
Age 9, North Carolina

Help us fill our gallery!

Send color copies of original artwork or photos to the address on page 2. Sorry, we can't return entries.

MEET A PET

Anna and Banjo the rescue dog are best buds.

Describe the day you got your pet.

my little brother really wanted a dog with a spot around its eye. Later that night we looked at the animal shelter website and found a dog that looked exactly like the dog my brother described!

Describe a time when your pet was naughty.

Banjo isn't the most well-behaved dog in the world. One time he chewed up my favorite pair of shoes.

Does your pet know any tricks?

No, he doesn't. He's also not the most talented dog in the world, but I still love him.

Describe a time when your pet was really smart.

When Banjo sees my mom put on her running shoes, he gets excited because he knows it's time for a walk.

How do you show your pet you love him?

I snuggle with him and make up songs about him. I love my dog.

Anna C.
Age 11, Louisiana







This is a picture of me and Banjo.

To find out how your pet can be featured, go to americangirl.com/play/magazine

MINI

Quiz

Which dinosaur matches your personality?

1. What's your favorite season?

a. summer
b. fall
c. winter



2. If you were traveling on an airplane, you'd want to sit

a. in the aisle seat. You like to get up and walk around when you can.
b. in the window seat. You love looking at the clouds.
c. in the middle seat. You like to get cozy and read a good book.

3. Which jacket do you like best?

a.



b.



c.



4. Which present would you love to receive?

a. a new lacrosse stick
b. cool binoculars
c. movie tickets



5. The best after-school activity is

a. track and field.
b. foreign language club.
c. hanging out with friends.



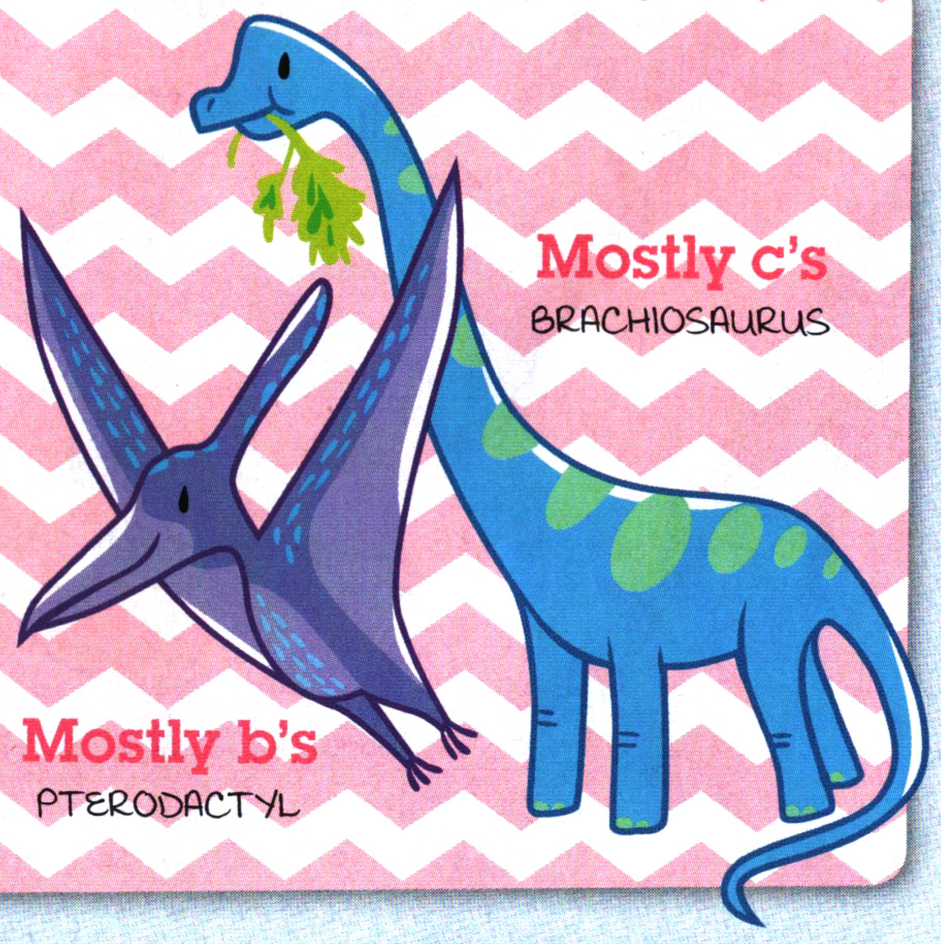
Answers

Mostly a's
TRICERATOPS



Mostly b's
PTERODACTYL

Mostly c's
BRACHIOSAURUS



APPLE Crunch

You'll love this easy-to-make snack.

1. Ask an adult to help you cut thin apple slices.

2. Spread peanut butter on each apple slice.

3. Sprinkle with crushed pretzels or chocolate chips.



Illustrations: Tracey Wood

Contest

Emojis!

Our readers designed expressive emojis.

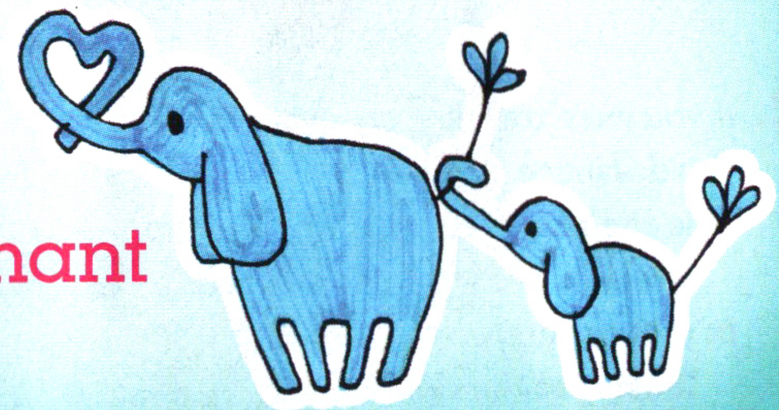


You're kitten me!

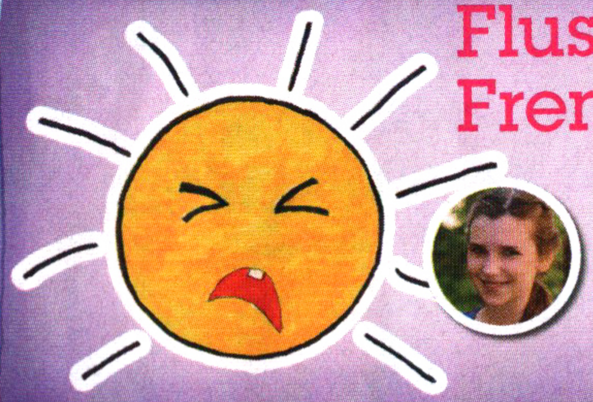


Dasha P.

Age 13, Massachusetts



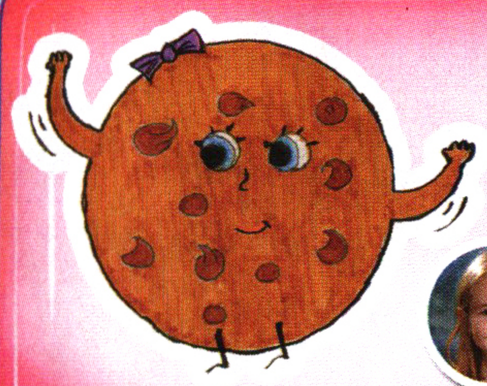
Elephant Love



Flustered Frenzy

Julia O.

Age 12, California



Cookie Break



Torin H.

Age 10, Washington

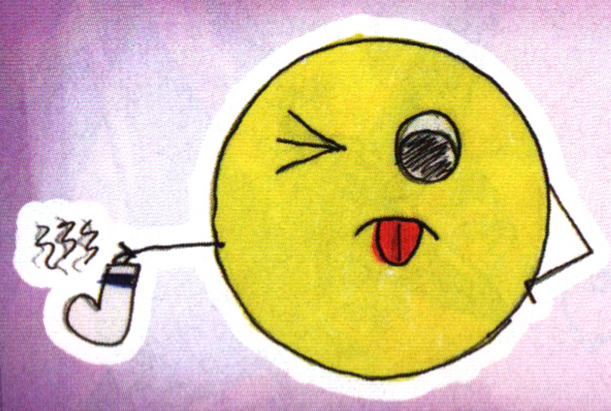


Emojicorn



Emma S.

Age 11, Pennsylvania



Stink-a-Roo



Neela K.

Age 11, Washington

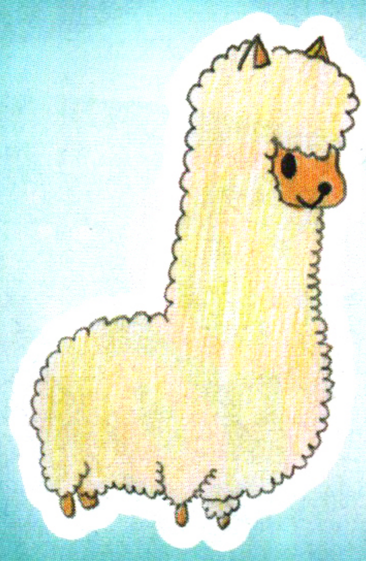
Pizza Party



Summer C.

Age 11, North Carolina

Llama Laugh





Angelina L.

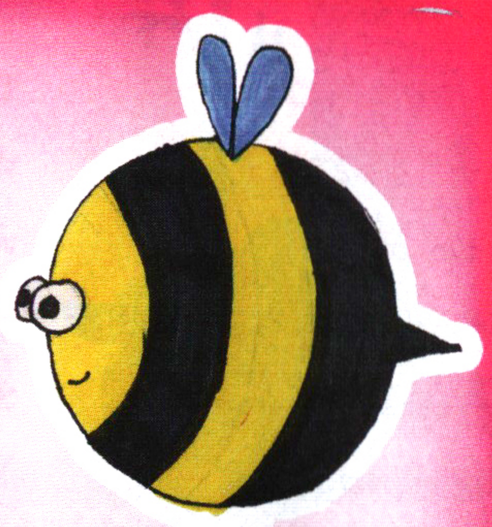
Age 11, Pennsylvania

Bee-lieve it!

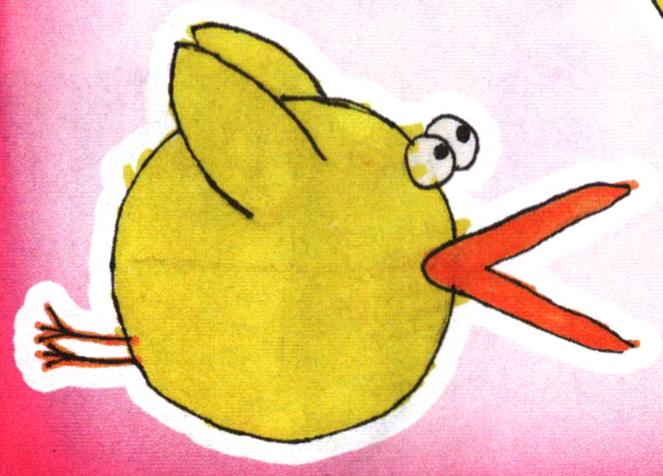


Nadia P.

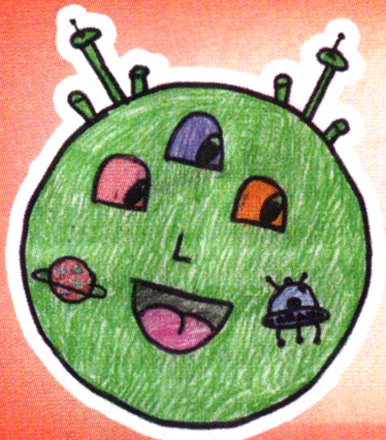
Age 10, Massachusetts



Chirp, chirp!



Out of this World





Mya L.

Age 12, Florida

Cool Cat

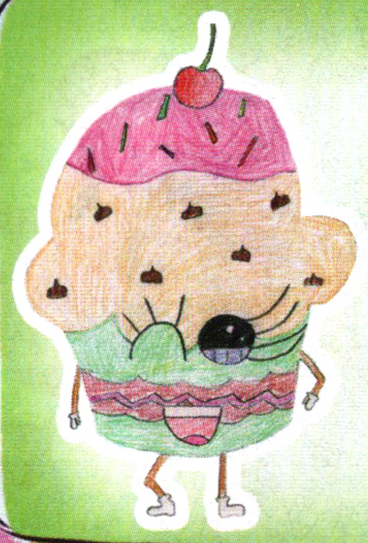




Sally H.

Age 12, Kentucky

Chocolate Chip Whip





Sommer L.

Age 10, Maryland

Birthday Bash





Melody L.

Age 10, Texas



New Contest: Butterfly

Design a new kind of butterfly. Do its wings look like cotton candy? Does it leave a trail of glitter or chocolate chips? We can't wait to see what you come up with! To send us your original butterfly drawing, follow the instructions on page 2. Postmark deadline: October 10, 2016. Winners will appear in the March/April 2017 issue. Sorry—we can't return entries.

Illustrations: Lucy Truman

Speak UP

Parties

Do you usually have a birthday party?

* 96% Yes
* 4% No

What's your favorite kind of party to attend?

* 45% Birthday party
* 28% Holiday party
* 12% New Year's Eve party
* 11% Costume party
* 4% Surprise party

Do you have a birthday party with your friends or family?

* 57% I have a separate party with each
* 23% I have a party with both
* 11% Family
* 9% Friends

Have you ever been to a boy-girl party?

* 74% Yes
* 26% No

What's the best party food?

* 61% Ice cream and cake
* 23% Pizza
* 6% Popcorn
* 5% Chips
* 5% Candy

Here are your dream parties:

carnival in your backyard

Halloween party in a haunted house

dog pool party

video game party

surfing party in Hawaii

Illustration: Paige Pooler

Coming Up: SPORTS

1. **What sports do you play? List them!**

2. **Which do you like better?**
   Team sports
   OR
   Individual sports

3. **What's your favorite thing about playing sports?**
   a. The cool uniforms
   b. Doing cheers with your team
   c. Improving and learning
   d. Spending time with friends
   e. Other (please list)

4. **Have you ever tried out for a team?**
   Yes OR No

5. **Do you play any sports during recess or gym? Explain.**

6. **Have you tried any of these extreme sports?**
   a. Rock climbing
   b. Snowboarding
   c. Mountain biking
   d. Skateboarding
   e. Whitewater rafting

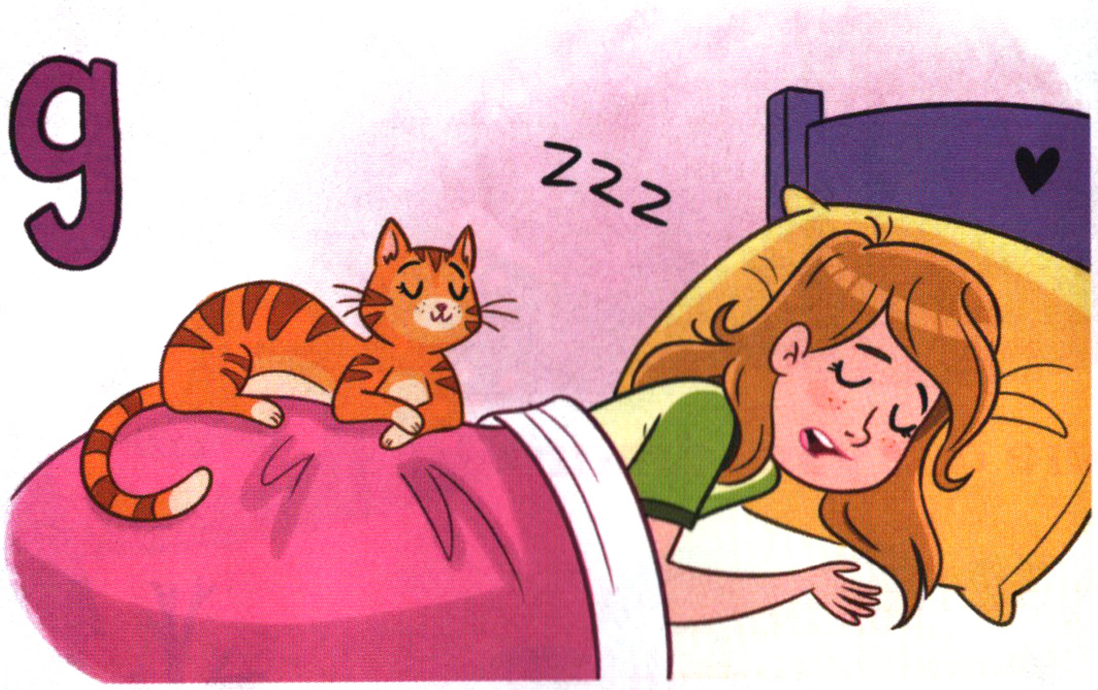
7. **Design a water bottle you'd love to use at practice.**

Send your answers to the address on page 2, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date.
Postmark deadline: October 10, 2016. Some answers will appear in the March/April 2017 issue. ★

According to Aggie™

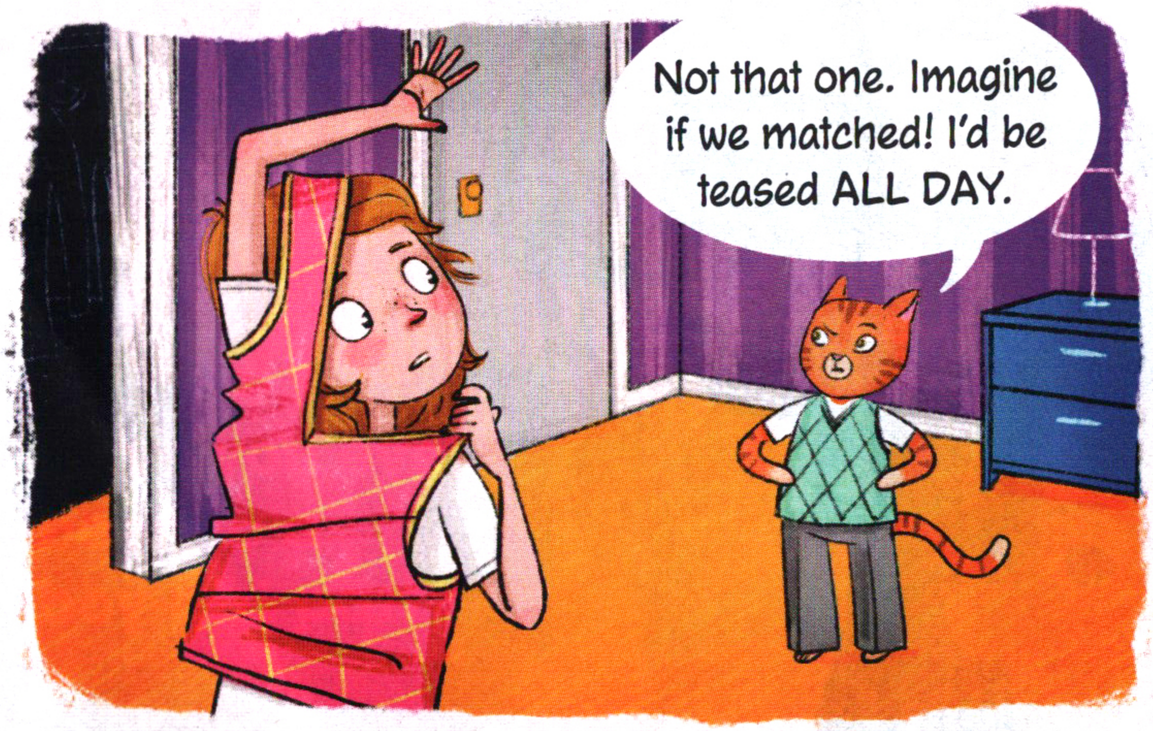
Well, That Was Weird

Created by
Mary Richards Beaumont,
Dan Nordskog & Genevieve Kote





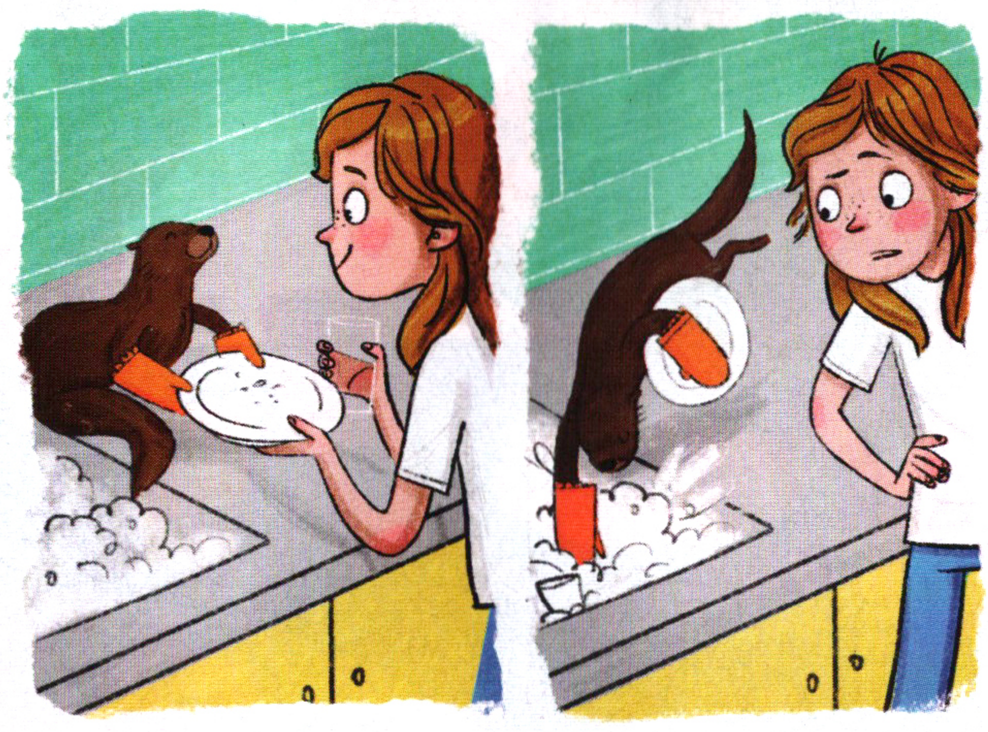












Where's my backpack?!

Where is it?!

odd noise

WAAAAAIT

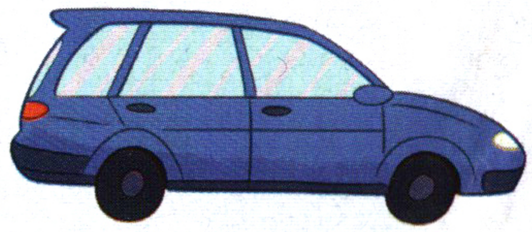
Talk about a weird dream . . .

Biiip Biip

We should get you a VEST, good boy!

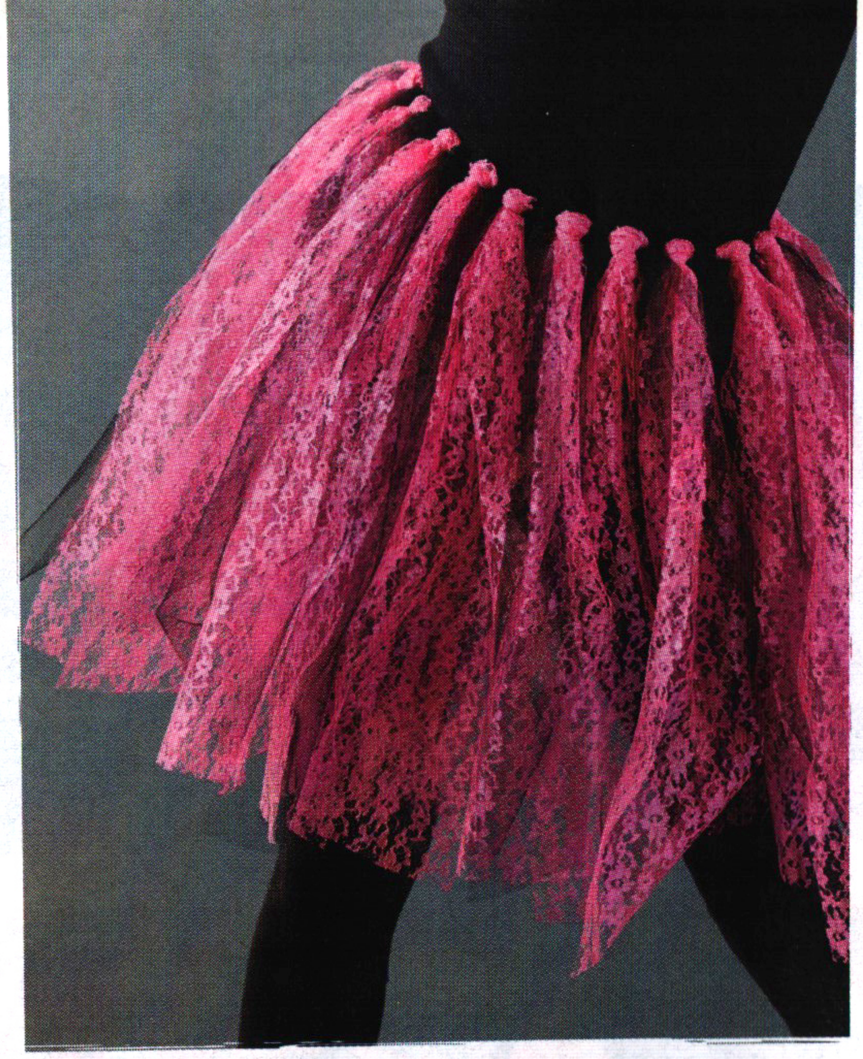
Don't miss my next misadventure:

THE CARGUMENT



Illustrations: Marta Kissi, Genevieve Kote



















Costume Creator

Need to dress up for Halloween or school spirit week? Use these ideas to make a costume one step at a time.

Base layer + Accessories + Headwear + Makeup = Costume



Styling: Deb Ahrens, Andrea Debbink, Christy Grace

Base Layer

All costumes start with a base layer. It's easy to create one with clothing you already own: a long-sleeve T-shirt and leggings; a leotard and maxi skirt; or a T-shirt, tights, and shorts combo. Try to stick to solid colors that make sense with your final costume.

Before you make any costume crafts, be sure to cover your work surfaces and ask a parent's permission.

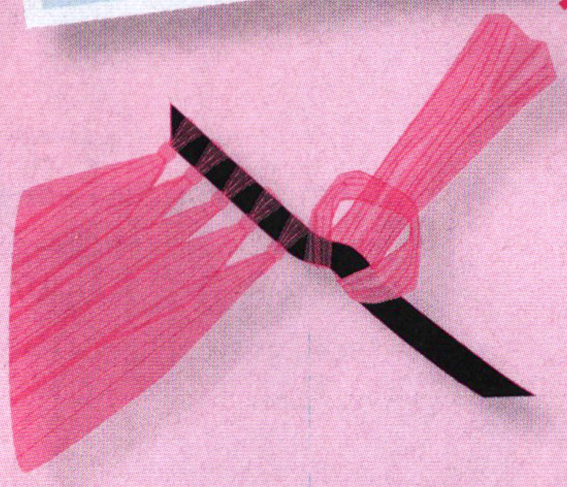
Accessories

Once you have a base layer, add accessories.

Tutu

Start with a piece of ribbon that ties comfortably around your waist. Next, measure from your waist to determine the length of your tutu, and double that number. Using this measurement, cut dozens of strips in that length from a roll of tulle (available at craft stores). To fasten the strips to the ribbon, fold a strip in half and lay the loop on top of the ribbon. Bring the ends of the tulle under the ribbon and through the loop. Pull tight. Repeat until the ribbon is full and the skirt reaches around your waist.

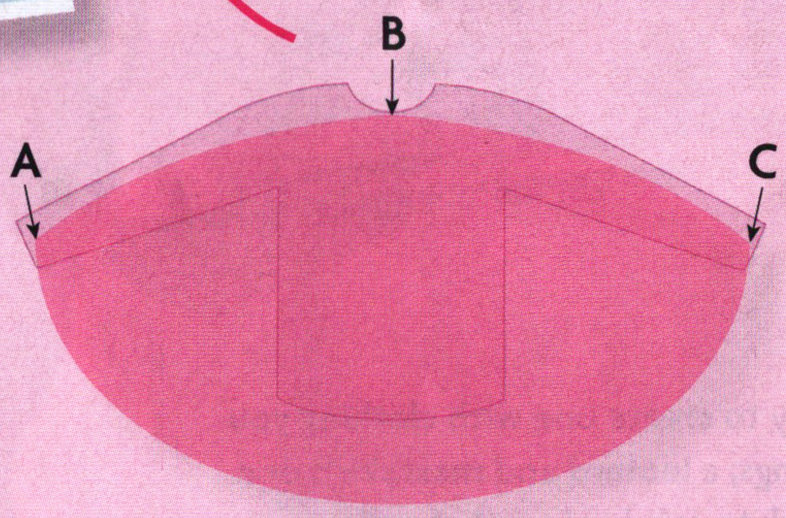




Wings

To make wings, you'll need a 4-foot-by-3-foot rectangle of chiffon fabric. Fold the fabric in half, and cut off a corner. Unfold the fabric and lay it on the back of a leotard or long-sleeve T-shirt as shown. To attach the fabric to the leotard, use fabric glue or sew a few stitches at points A, B, and C. Let dry.

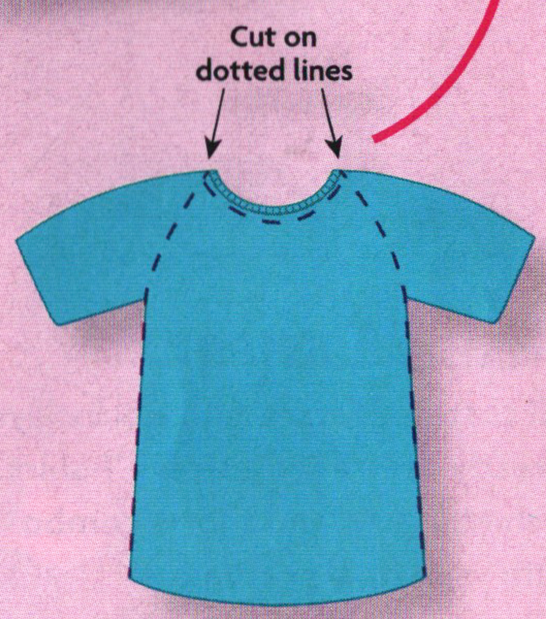




Cape

Start with an extra-large adult T-shirt. Cut the T-shirt as shown. Attach adhesive-backed hook-and-loop fasteners to the front straps. Then ask an adult to help you add an iron-on design (available at craft stores) and adhesive rhinestones.





Headwear

Top off your look with hair accessories.



Star Crown

Use a cookie cutter or template to cut out stars from glitter foam sheets. Attach the stars in layers on a headband using craft glue. Let dry.



Cat Ears

Fold a sheet of adhesive-backed felt in half. Draw two triangles as shown. With the felt still folded, cut out the triangles. Unfold the triangles and remove the paper backing. Fold the shapes around a thin plastic headband, and press the sticky sides together, making sure the ears point up.

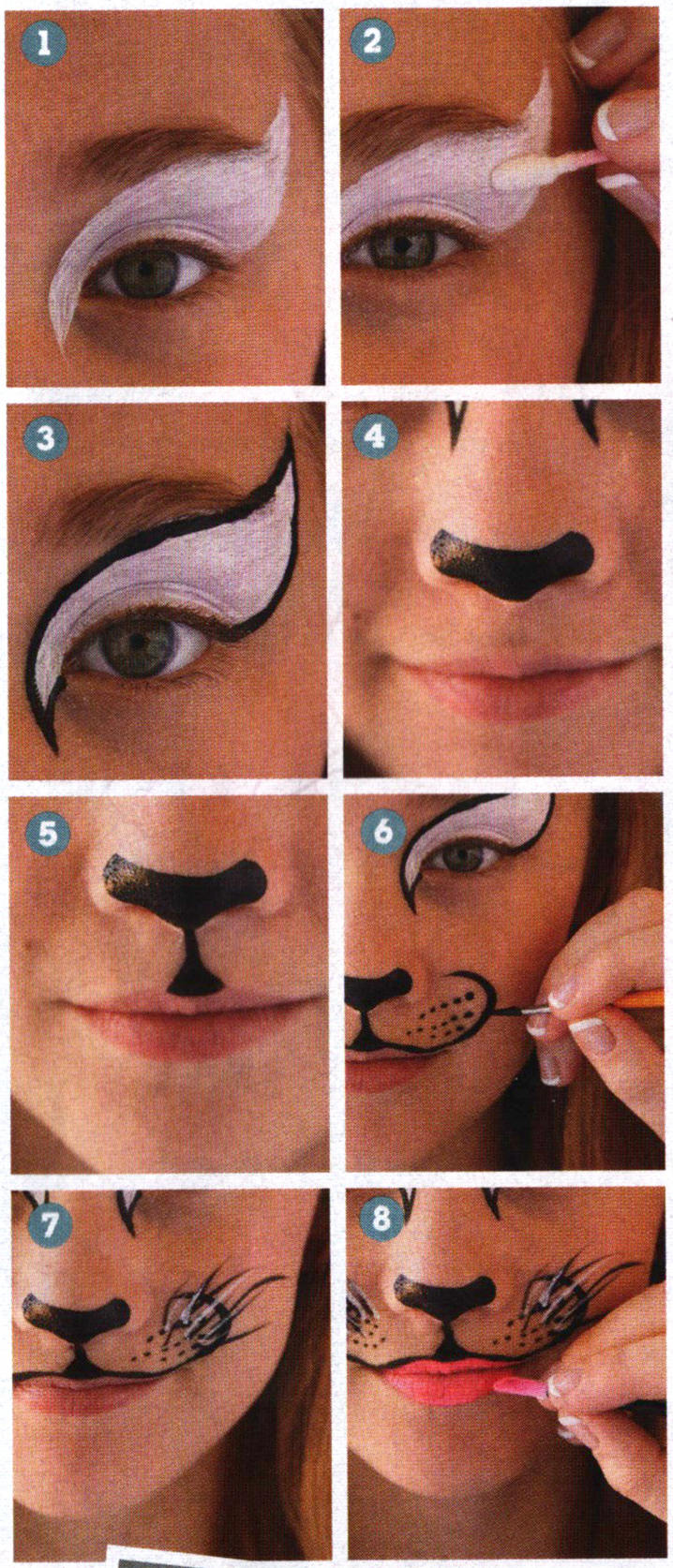
Costume Clips

Attach tiny decorations to the ends of bobby pins or hair clips with craft glue and let dry. Try fake flowers, plastic spiders, rhinestones, beads, seashells, or butterflies.

Makeup

Ask an adult to help you find nontoxic costume makeup that's safe for kids (available at discount stores or costume stores). Then ask the adult to help create designs on your face by following these steps.

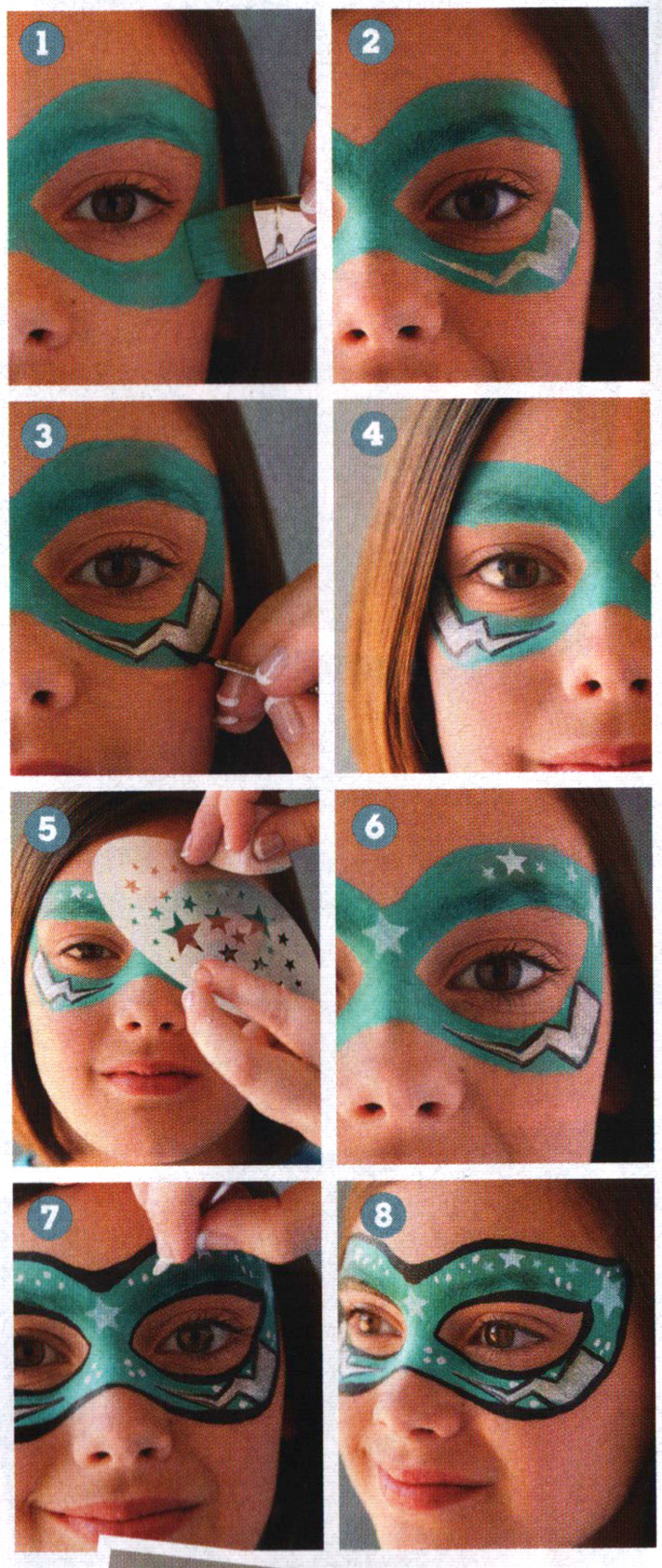
Cat



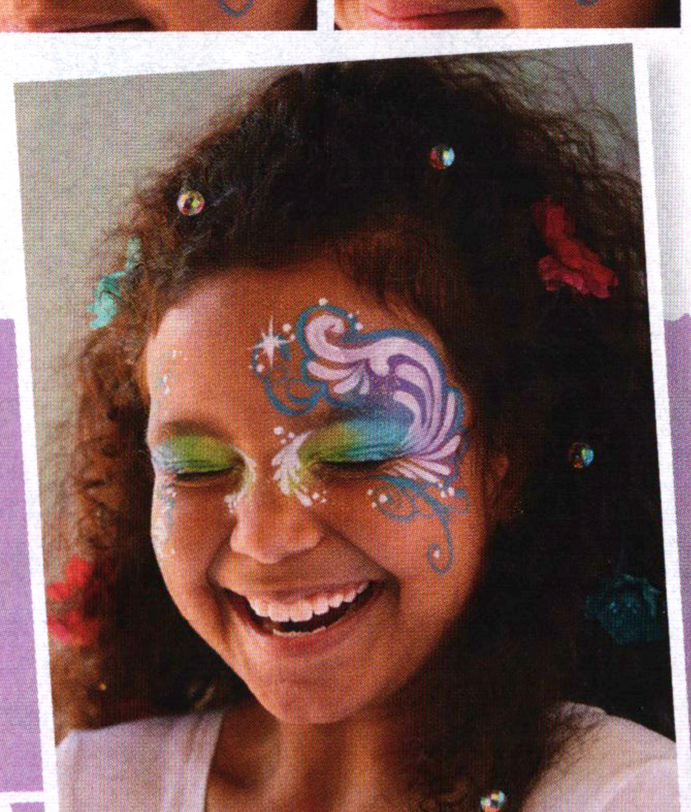
Fairy



Superhero









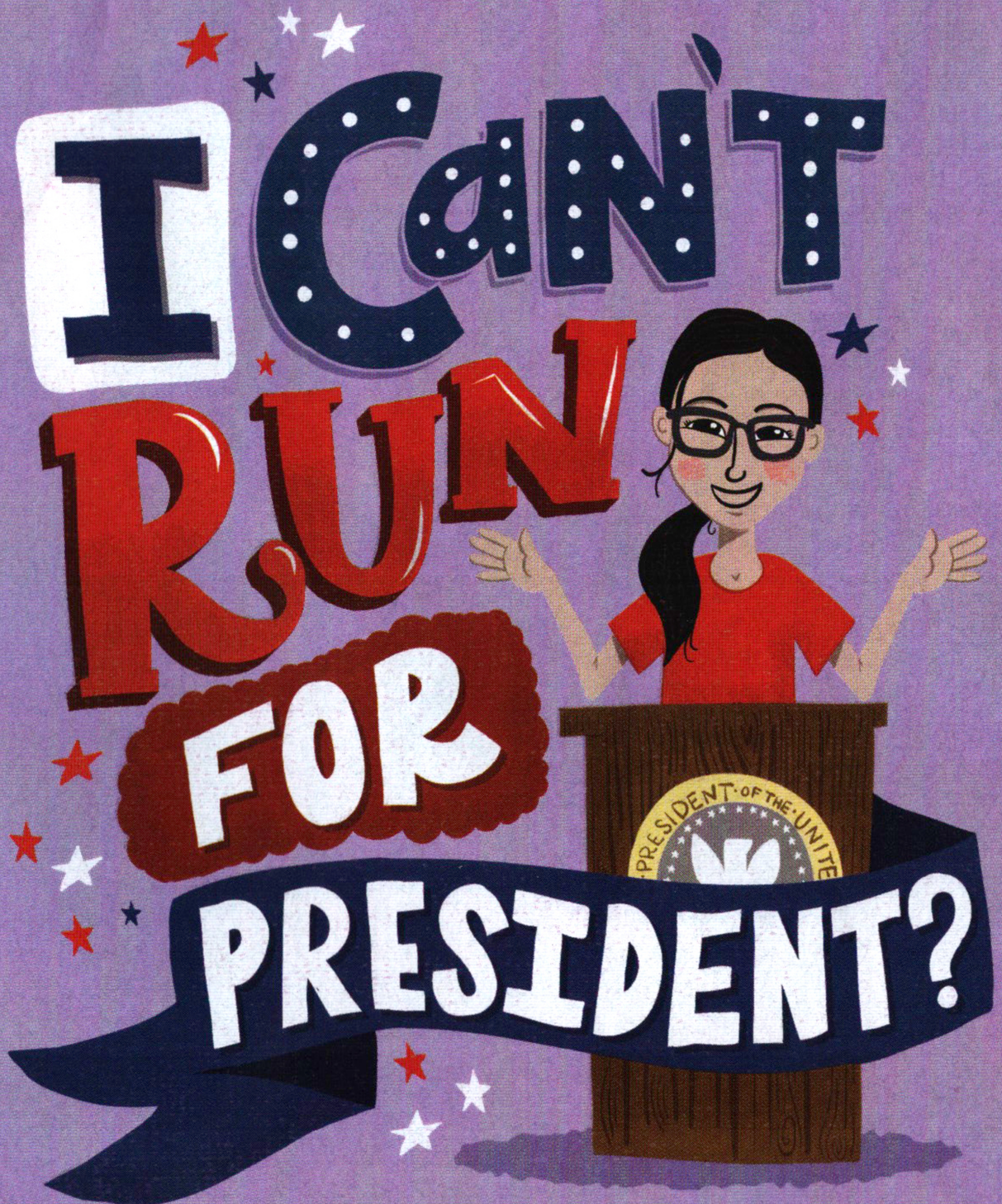
Props

Round up extra props and accessories you may already have on hand to finish your look! ★

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

Meet four girls who couldn't believe what they found out—and who decided to change it.

I CAN'T RUN FOR PRESIDENT?



Alena M., age 11

My mom always told me that when I grow up, I could be whatever I wanted. When I was seven, I told her I wanted to be president of the United States one day. That's when she gave me the bad news. Only people born in the U.S. can be president. I'm American, but I was born in China. My parents adopted me when I was a baby.

I love my country, and I know I'd make a great leader. I would help solve problems like world hunger. I'd bring people together by encouraging everyone to learn about other cultures. I was disappointed that an unfair law would keep me from my dream. Then I thought, *Hey wait! This is America. We all have the right to use our voice and try to change things we believe are unfair.*

I learned how our government works and how laws are created or changed. Then I wrote a letter to President Obama telling him that I wanted to become president one day and that we should change the law. I asked all my classmates and teachers to sign a petition saying they believed in my cause.

I shared my letter and petition (I got 120 signatures!) with lawmakers in my state, asking them to support my cause, too. The Massachusetts State House filed a resolution on my behalf and asked me to *testify* (which means to speak) in person. To prepare, I typed what I wanted to say. I practiced over and over again in front of my family. On the day of my speech, I brought notes with me. I felt prepared. I'm still waiting to hear whether the resolution passes. If it does, it will go on to Congress for consideration. If the resolution doesn't pass, you can bet I'll keep trying.

My Friend Can't Use Our Playground?

Jayci S., age 10



Do you love swinging at the playground? I do. I love that feeling of flying when I swing outside at school during recess. My hair flies, and I smile and laugh. There's only one thing I don't like about swinging: For a long time, my friend Rylea couldn't swing with me.

Rylea is a really joyful person and makes me laugh. We met in second grade and have been friends ever since. Rylea has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair to get around. In all the years I've known her, during recess, she had to sit in her wheelchair parked on the sidewalk. It made me feel sad.

Every kid deserves the chance to play. I wanted to do something so that Rylea could swing with me.

My mom and I did some research about installing wheelchair-accessible swings. We talked to my school principal. Each swing costs about $10,000. We wanted to put them at our school and at other elementary schools in our area. We talked to a lot of people about the project. It turns out, an educational charity wanted to help pay for it. We sold T-shirts and bracelets to raise money.

The whole project took almost two years. My family and I raised $12,000. One day at recess, Rylea saw the swing on our playground for the first time. It was the day after her birthday, which made it extra special. She got really excited. Watching her swing was really, really, really, really cool. Her hair blew, and she smiled and laughed. She liked swinging as much as I do. I guess that's because we're so much alike. Making it possible for her to swing gave me a great feeling. I think I actually changed her life a little.

Illustrations: Matthew Taylor Wilson

the Bees ARE Disappearing?



Mikaila U., age 11

When I was four years old, I got stung by a bee—twice in one week! After that, I was really scared of bees. That's when my parents suggested that I learn about bees instead of being scared. I read picture books and watched videos about bees, and I learned how important these insects are to our world.

Bees help make the food we eat because of their pollination. (That's the process of moving pollen from one plant to another so the plants can grow.) Take pizza, for instance. If we didn't have bees to pollinate tomato plants, we wouldn't have tomatoes for sauce. And we wouldn't have cheese without pollination, either. Of course, cheese comes from cows' milk. But cows eat alfalfa hay. And you guessed it, bees pollinate alfalfa. The bad news is that bees are struggling to survive. Many are dying. Some scientists think it might be because of chemicals that are used to kill other insects. What would happen if there were no more bees?

I wanted to help. I thought, *What if I make lemonade, sell it, and raise money to help bees?* I talked to my Great-Grannie Helen. She gave me her recipe for flaxseed lemonade. It came from a cookbook from 1940.

I added a twist to her old recipe: honey. That way, I could sell the lemonade and donate some of the money to groups that are helping to save bees. I could also support local beekeepers by using their honey in my product. And I would be educating others on the importance of bees and helping to save them.

My dad showed me how to make a budget and plan for supplies that I'd need to buy. At first, I sold lemonade at a stand at a kids' business event. But I wanted to help bees all year long. We talked to a pizza place near where I live. They said if we put the lemonade in 12-ounce glass bottles, they would sell it. Now more than 30 grocery stores sell it, too. This year we sold about 140,000 bottles. I love helping to save bees. It's the sweetest feeling ever.

Kids With Cancer Have To Just Sit There?

When I was eight years old, I had cancer. It was really hard. One of the worst things was having to sit in the doctor's office for hours during chemotherapy treatments. (*Chemotherapy,* or chemo, is medicine for cancer that drips into your body through a needle in a vein. Say it like KEY-mo.) I'd want to walk around and do things, but dealing with the big poles that hold the bags of medicine was a pain. I'd have to roll them around with me. I'd trip over them, and the poles got stuck on everything. It made my stress over being sick even worse.

Last year for science fair, my teacher said we should think of how to solve an everyday problem. When you have cancer, the IV poles are an everyday problem. (IV is short for *intravenous*, which means "into a vein.") I started thinking of making a backpack for kids so they could get around and play and go outside while they're getting chemo. That would be huge.

For my project, I got a backpack and made a *prototype,* or model. I took a small box and made it look like an IV machine. I had a small pole sticking out of the top, where you'd hang the bag of medicine, with a flap to protect it. Then I painted it to make it look nice.

After the science fair, I got a patent for my invention. That means I officially owned the idea. I was pretty shocked. Companies started talking to my family about making the backpacks. But it's very expensive. A lot of people have donated money to help. So far I've raised $55,000.

The goal is to make backpacks for kids, teens, and adults with cancer so that they can feel better about their treatment even though it's a hard situation. I especially want to make chemo easier for kids. I know how scary it can be.

Before the backpack project, I thought of cancer as awful. But now I realize that a good thing that came from it was that I could help others. I don't like seeing kids with cancer suffer through treatment. I hope my invention can help them.

Kylie M., age 13





Quiz

SUPER (GIRL) POWER

Take this quiz to discover your secret superhero identity!



1. On a lazy Sunday, you'd love to . . .

a. do room crafts.
b. spend time outside and listen to the birds.
c. practice tricks with your dog.
d. research cool places to visit.
e. watch your favorite sports team on TV.

2. What would you like to go shopping for?

a. A new backpack for school
b. A bike
c. A new bed for your kitten
d. A fancy suitcase
e. Tennis shoes

3. Which activity would you love to do with your family?

a. Take a painting class
b. Go on a camping trip
c. Volunteer at an animal shelter
d. Visit a museum in another country
e. Run a race together



4. At school you love . . .

a. reorganizing your locker and backpack.
b. watering plants in the greenhouse.
c. feeding the class hamster.
d. practicing your French.
e. playing kickball with friends.

5. You'd love to do a jigsaw puzzle of . . .

a. an abstract piece of art.
b. a beautiful garden.
c. a coral reef.
d. a train in the countryside.
e. a ballerina.

6. What's your favorite creature?

a. A chameleon
b. A butterfly
c. You love all animals, but especially dogs
d. An eagle
e. A cheetah



7. Your lucky charm is . . .

a. a small gemstone.
b. a rose necklace.
c. a stuffed squirrel.
d. a coin from Spain.
e. an old baseball cap.

8. The best part of your room is . . .

a. your closet.
b. the window seat.
c. your bed.
d. your desk.
e. your yoga station.



9. If your school was putting on a musical, how would you participate?

a. You would create the costumes.
b. You'd help paint a forest scene.
c. You'd be in the chorus with your friends.
d. You would try out for the lead.
e. You'd be the director and handle the behind-the-scenes work.



10. What do you do on a rainy day?

a. Organize your room
b. Put on rain boots and walk through the puddles
c. Play board games
d. Make food from other countries
e. Play charades with friends

11. You would love to raise money for . . .

a. all kids to have art supplies.
b. a community garden.
c. endangered animals.
d. a class field trip.
e. new gym equipment at school.

12. What's your favorite thing about going to a carnival?

a. The bright lights and music
b. Playing games
c. Riding a cute horse on the merry-go-round
d. Being at the very top of the Ferris wheel
e. Jumping in the bounce house



13. You would spend your dream day . . .

a. hosting your own fashion show.
b. snorkeling and learning about different types of coral.
c. seeing a foal born at horse camp.
d. walking the Great Wall of China.
e. taking a private lesson from your favorite professional gymnast.

14. Which Halloween costume do you like best?

a. A shooting star
b. A Venus flytrap
c. A giraffe
d. A globe
e. A Mt. Everest climber



15. Your friends always . . .

a. appreciate your creativity.
b. enjoy spending time outside with you.
c. love your positivity.
d. encourage you to dream big.
e. look to you for advice.

Turn the page for answers!

Illustrations: Vera Brosgol

Mostly a's: RAINBOW GIRL

Superpower: She can change the color of any object.

She brightens everything and everyone around her. She loves fashion, art, and being organized.

She most recently used her power to brighten up the walls in her classroom at school.

Mostly c's: AMAZING ANIMAL GIRL

Superpower: She can turn into any type of animal whenever she wants.

She loves animals, likes to relax, and has a gentle personality.

She most recently used her power to turn into a mouse and grab the phone that she dropped between her bed and the wall.

Mostly b's: FLOWER FORCE GIRL

Superpower: She can make plants grow very fast.

She loves nature and tries to spend time outside whenever she can.

She most recently used her power to grow a tiny seedling into a giant oak for her tree house.

Mostly d's:
TELEPORT GIRL

Superpower: She can teleport herself to anywhere in the world.

She's very adventurous and loves to travel.

She most recently used her power while doing a school project on dolphins. She teleported herself to a beach to see for herself how high dolphins could jump.

Mostly e's:
SUPER SPEED GIRL

Superpower: She is unbelievably fast.

She is very athletic and loves playing sports with her friends.

She most recently used her power when she forgot her basketball uniform at home. She zoomed home and back to the court in 30 seconds. ★

STARSTRUCK

Reach for the stars (and planets) at a space-themed party!

Galaxy Garlands

Before the party, decorate your space! For each garland, you'll need a piece of string that's about 5 feet long. Use cookie cutters to trace stars and circles on glitter paper. (You can also use a paper punch.) To assemble the garland, attach two stars or circles together using double-stick tape with the string sandwiched in between. Repeat with the rest of the shapes until you have enough garlands to create a backdrop. Ask an adult to help you hang the garlands.

Little Dippers

Serve up some stellar snacks! Bake these munchies right before the party. First, preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Unroll a sheet of thawed puff pastry dough on a floured cutting board. Cut out star and moon shapes using small cookie cutters. Place the shapes on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Ask an adult to bake them for 10 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool before serving.

SLEEPOVER

Planet Pops

Make cake pops that look like planets.

1.



A day before the party, make a 9-by-13-inch cake using store-bought cake mix. (The cake needs to dry out.) Once the cake is slightly dry, break it into pieces and place in a large bowl. Using clean hands, crumble the cake into tiny bits.

2.



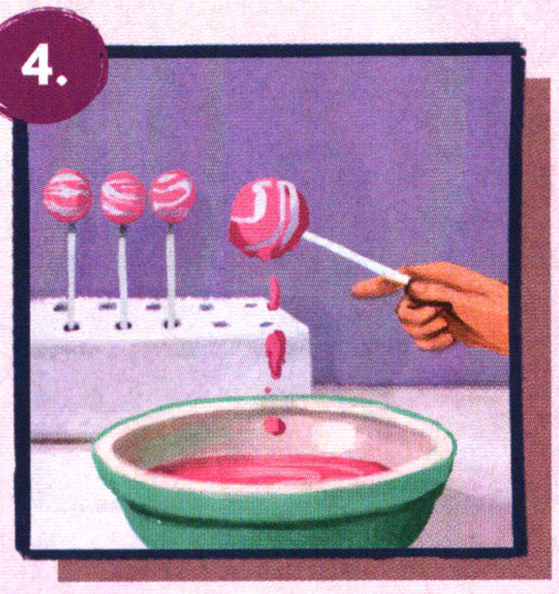
Add ¼ cup premade frosting to the bowl and stir in with the crumbs. Then use your hands to roll the mixture into 1-inch balls. Press a lollipop stick into each cake ball and place them on a tray covered with wax paper. Place the pops in the freezer for 10 minutes.

3.

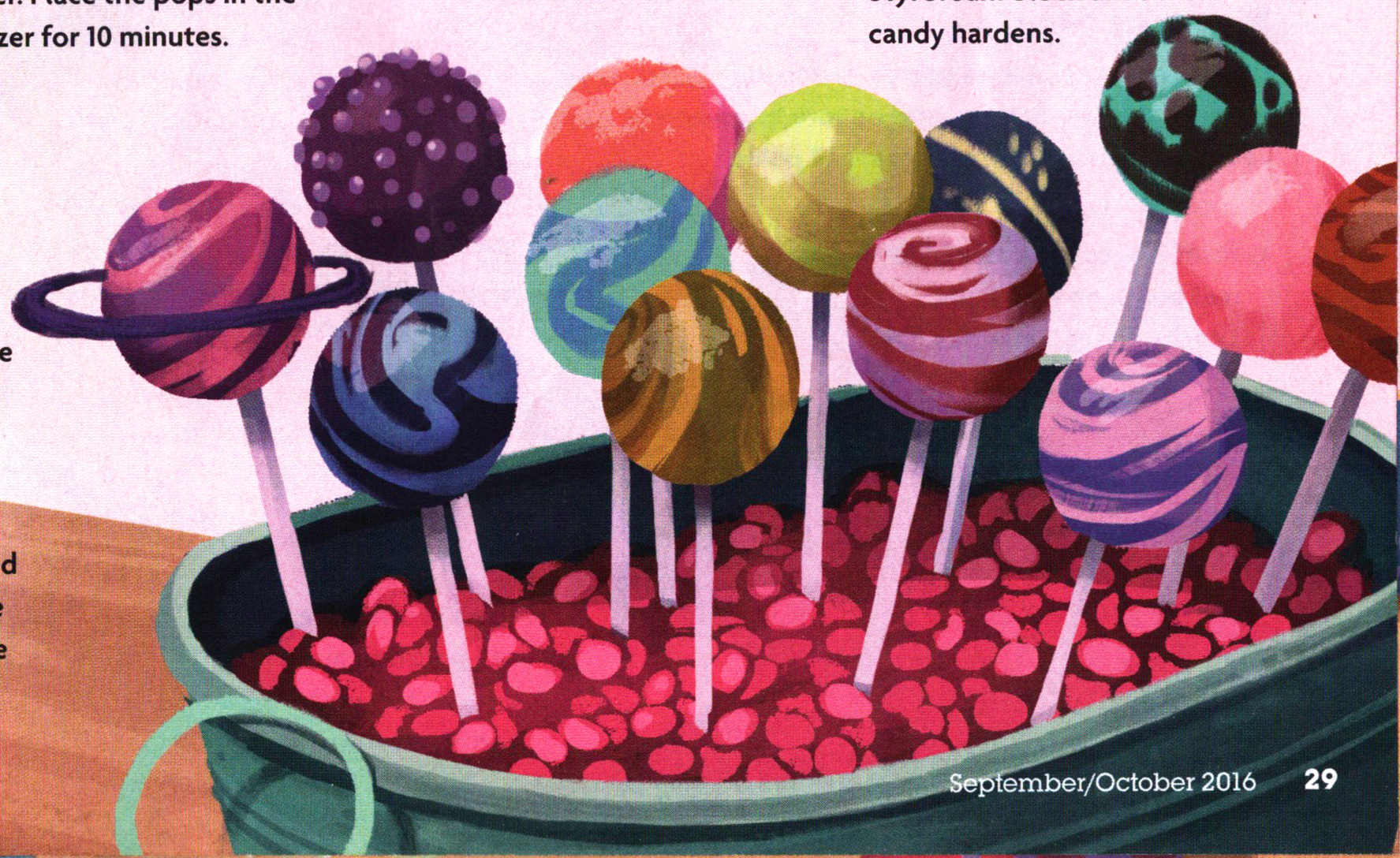


Meanwhile, make the candy coating. Pour 1 cup colored candy melts in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high, stirring every 30 seconds until melted. Stir until smooth.

4.



Dip each cake pop into the melted candy and slowly spin to cover all of the cake. Lift out, and hold the cake pop upside down and let the extra candy drip back into the bowl. Place the cake pops in a Styrofoam block until the candy hardens.



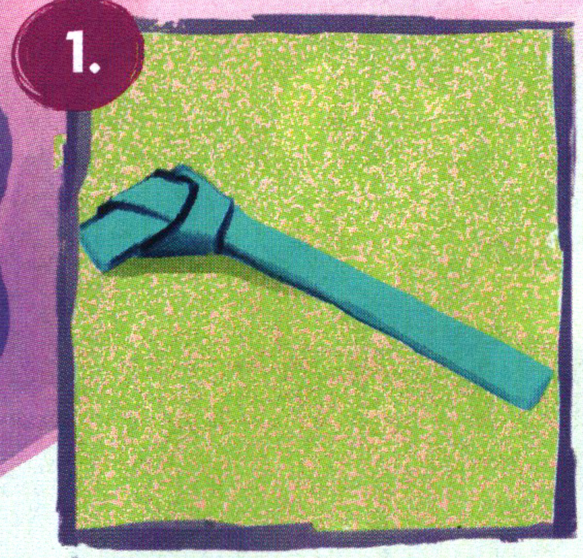
Big Dipper

While the Little Dippers cool, make a cheesy dip to serve with them. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, stir together ¾ cup cream cheese, 1½ cup shredded cheddar cheese, 1 cup broccoli florets, and ½ cup sour cream. Spread the cheese mixture in a greased 8-by-8-inch pan. Top with ½ cup shredded cheese. Ask an adult to help you bake the dip for 25 minutes. Let cool slightly. Serve with Little Dippers and veggies.

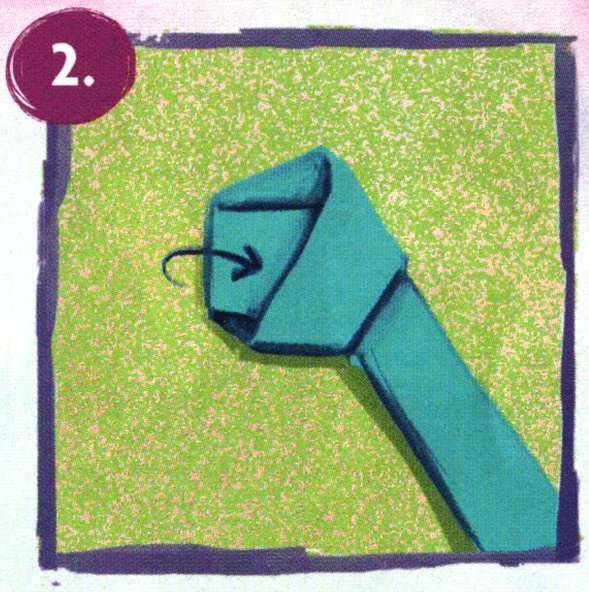
Illustrations: Melissa Manwill

Lucky Stars

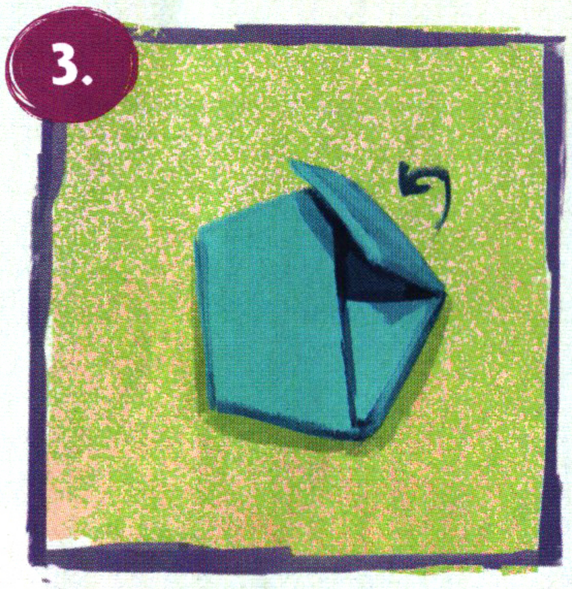
Fill a jar with these teeny tiny stars and use it as a room decoration.



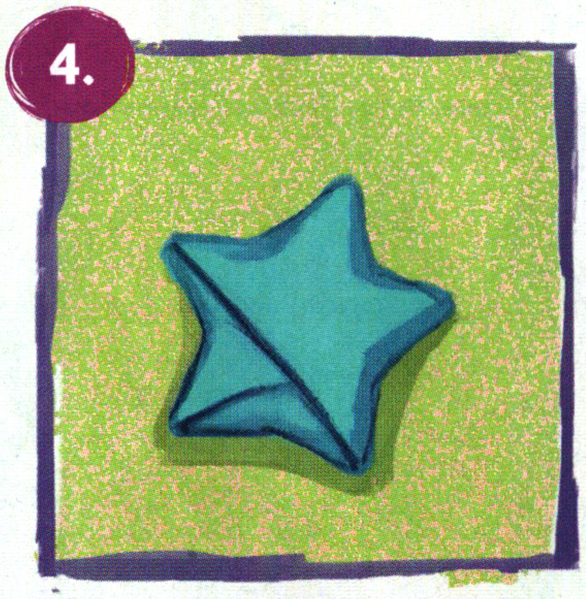
Start with an 8½-by-½-inch strip of paper. Make a loose knot as shown.



Flatten and crease the knot to make a pentagon shape. Insert the short end of the paper strip into the folds.



Wrap the long end of the strip around the pentagon, creasing along each edge. When you reach the end, tuck the end of the strip into the pentagon.



Use your fingernails to carefully press in the sides of the pentagon. The shape should puff out and form a star.



Nebula Nails

Try a starry style! Ask an adult's permission before doing this activity, and be sure to cover your work surface. Use nontoxic nail polish.

1. Paint one coat of dark blue nail polish on your nails. Let dry about 5 minutes.

2. Apply pink nail polish to a small clean makeup sponge. Dab the pink polish on the blue polish, making sure not to cover the whole nail. Let dry for 15 minutes.

3. Use a toothpick and white nail polish to make tiny dots on top of the pink and blue layers. Let dry.

Moon Rock

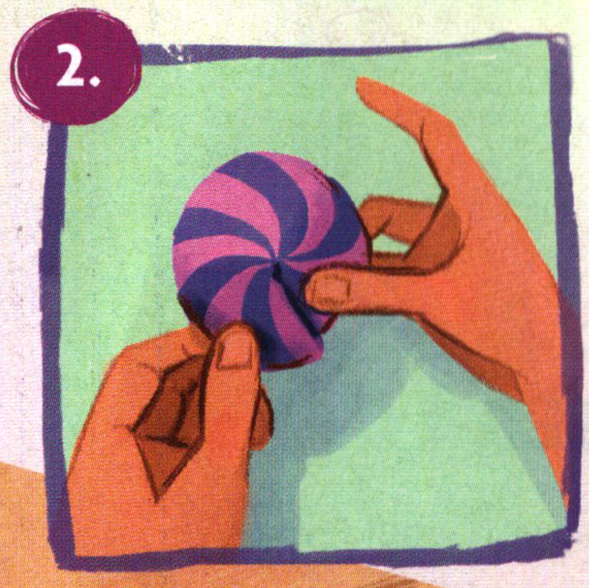
Have an out-of-this-world dance party! Before you begin, ask your guests to write space-related words on scraps of paper and put them in a bucket. Turn on some dance music and take turns choosing a word from the bucket. Each person has to make up a dance move based on her word. Keep choosing words from the bucket and making up moves until all the words are gone. Here are some words to get you started: orbit, nebula, quasar, cosmic ray, fireball.

Rocket Favors

When it's time to blast off, give your guests these rocket party favors. Assemble them before the party.



Start with a cardboard tube. Cut a piece of scrapbook paper that will completely cover the tube. Wrap the paper around the tube and tape in place.



Cut a 3½-inch circle from scrapbook paper. Cut a slit halfway into the circle. Overlap the paper circle until you have a cone shape. Tape the cone to hold it together.



Use craft glue to attach the cone to the top of the paper tube. Let dry.



Wrap treats and favors in a cellophane treat bag and close the end with a twist tie. Place the bag inside the tube so the end of the bag sticks out. ★

Number Fun

These games are great to play with friends.
Bonus: They can help you improve your math skills, too!

MATH WAR

You will need two players and a deck of playing cards.

1. Remove face cards from the deck. Aces count as ones.
2. Shuffle the cards and divide them into two equal stacks.
3. Give each player a stack with the cards facing down.
4. To play, players each flip over one card at the same time. The first player to shout the sum of the two card values collects the two cards and puts them on the bottom of her stack. In case of a tie, each player flips another card, and the first person to say the new sum wins all four cards.
5. The player who collects all the cards is the winner.

WAR TIMES

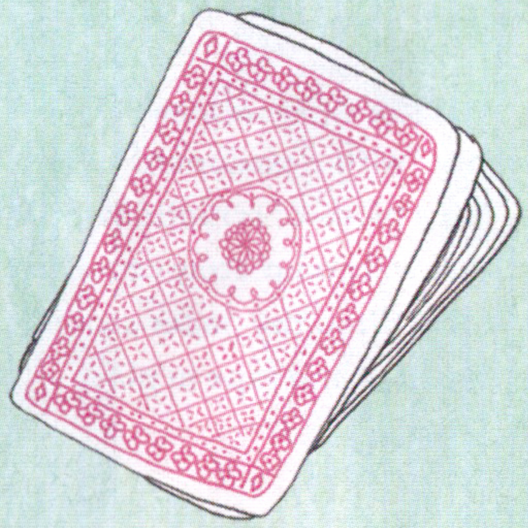
You can play War with multiplication, too. When the cards are flipped, the first player to shout the product wins the cards.

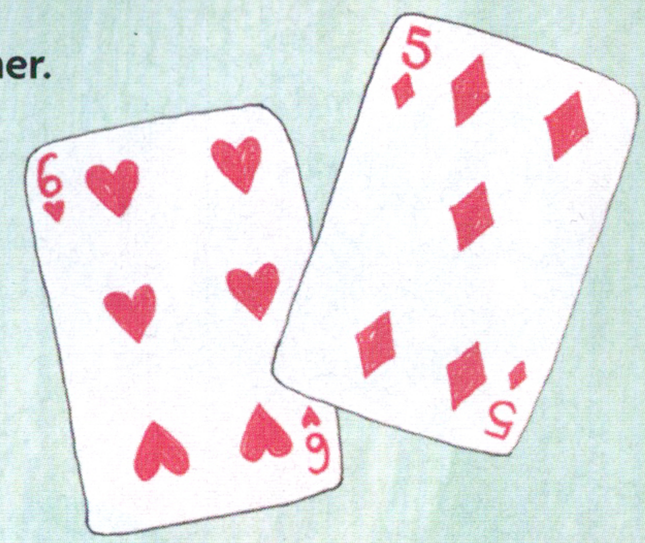


NUMBER NAMER

Play this game the same way you would play 20 Questions. You need at least two players.

1. One player thinks of a whole number—any number.
2. Other players can ask up to 20 yes-or-no math questions to try to figure out what the number is.
3. The first person who says the number is the winner.
4. Let a different player choose a number and answer questions for each round.

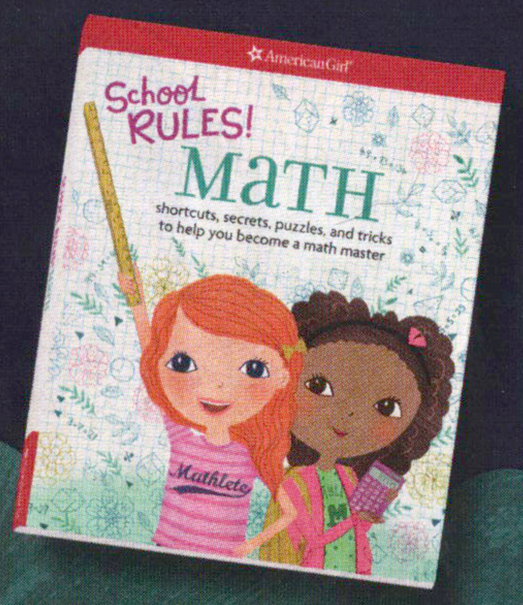




HOP. SKIP. AND JUMP

In this game, players practice *skip-counting,* or counting in blocks of a certain number value. To skip-count by 5s, for example, you say, "5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35," and so on. You will need four or more players.

1. Players sit in a circle.
2. One player starts by naming a number other than 1.
3. The player to her left skip-counts by the number the first player named, saying the next number. If the first player said 7, the next player says 14.
4. The next player to the left says the next number in the series, and so on.
5. If a player says the wrong number or takes more than 5 seconds for her turn, she gets a point. She then chooses a new number to start the next round.
6. When a player has 3 points, she is out. The last player in the game is the winner.



More number fun can be found in the book *School Rules! Math.*

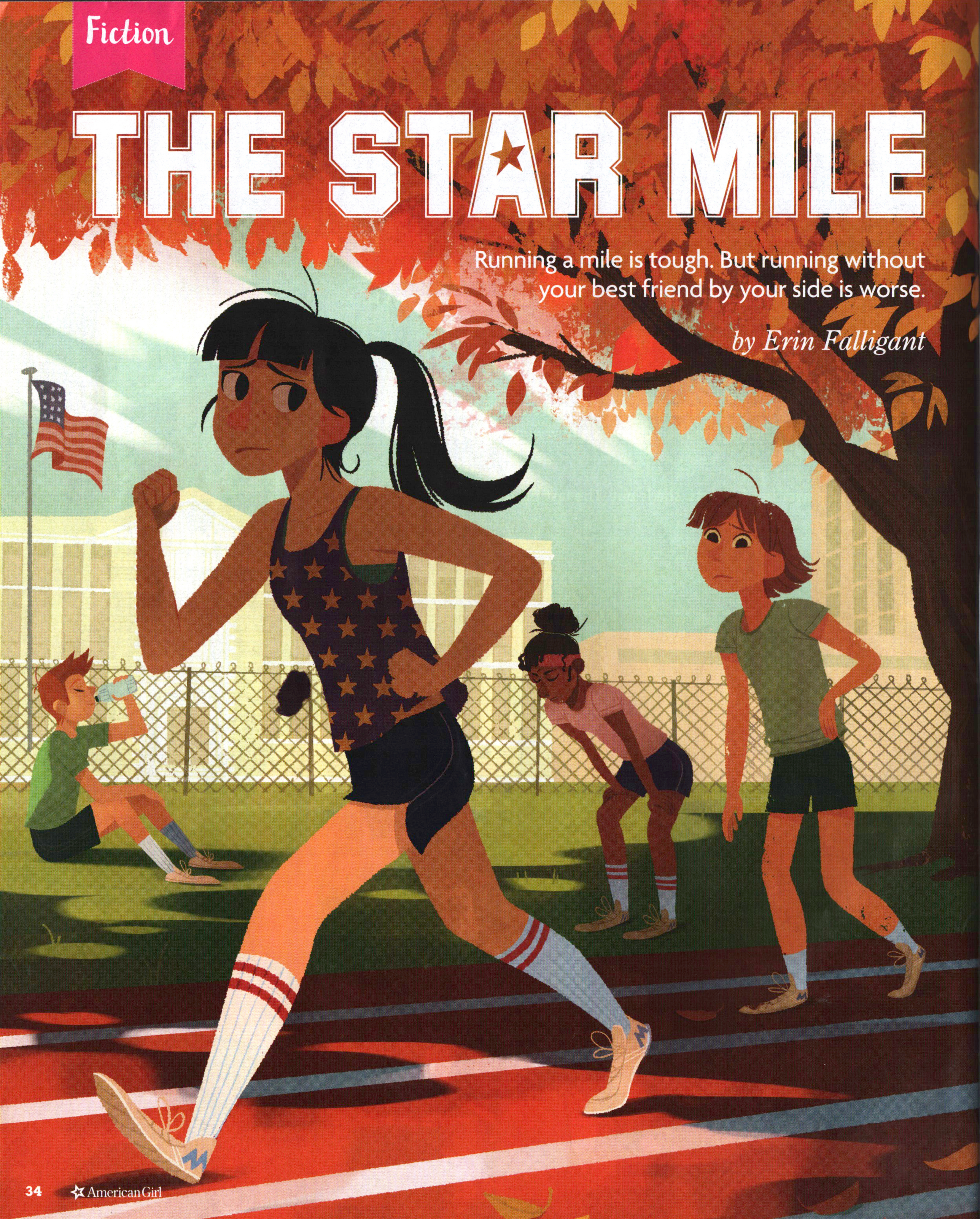
Illustrations: Rebecca Jones

Fiction

THE STAR MILE

Running a mile is tough. But running without your best friend by your side is worse.

by Erin Falligant



Stop, Mariah! I can't . . . take . . . another step," said Josie, dragging her feet as if she'd just run a marathon.

"Don't be so dramatic," I said, giggling. "That was only our first lap!"

Josie sighed. "It might be my last," she said. "This mile is going to kill me."

Just then, a sparkly pink blur sped by—Anya in a T-shirt that read "SUPERSTAR" across the back. A silver star glittered beneath her bouncing ponytail.

"She doesn't talk much, but she sure can run," I said thoughtfully. Anya was new to our fifth-grade class, and so far, the only words I'd heard her say were "excuse me" in the lunch line.

Josie didn't respond. She had stopped walking altogether and was redoing her brown ponytail.

"No stopping, girls," scolded Mrs. P., our gym teacher, from the sidelines. "Run, walk, skip, hop—I don't care. Just keep moving forward."

This was only a practice mile. The real mile run was Monday, but Mrs. P. wanted to give us a chance to see what we could do today.

"Let's go, Jo," I said, reaching for her hand and tugging her along.

Josie and I usually walked the mile together every spring and fall in gym class. But something about this crisp fall day made me want to run, not walk. Couldn't Josie feel it, too—the energy in the air that sent dry leaves dancing along the track?

"Slow down!" she whined, grabbing her waist. Apparently all she felt was a side ache.

So we walked. But when Anya passed again, that sparkly star on her T-shirt caught my eye. As it disappeared around the bend, I started jogging—just to keep it in my sights.

"Mariah!" said Josie. "Wait!"

"Sorry," I said. But my body—and that shining star—pulled me forward.

"Fine," my best friend grumbled. "Just go."

My conscience said don't, but my body was on a mission. I sprinted to catch up with the star, and then I started to pass.

Anya glanced to her left and saw me coming. Her eyebrows rose in surprise, but she grinned and ran faster, too.

We ran a whole lap like that, side by side. I was breathing hard, but it felt so good to stretch my legs! Even Mrs. P. called out, "Nice stride, Mariah. Keep it up!"

But when we came up behind Josie again, guilt reached out and tripped me. I slowed down to walk with her, and Anya sailed past.

Josie was limping and staring straight ahead.

"Hey, Jo," I said, trying to catch my breath. "How are you doing?"

Nothing. Either she was too tired to speak, or she didn't want to.

And that's how we crossed the finish line a lap later—in total silence.



Illustrations: Stevie Lewis



I'm still waiting," said Ms. Spitz, tapping the board with her fingernail. "An adverb, anyone?"

The sentence on the board read: She sailed the boat _____ across the lake.

Usually Josie has her hand up during all forty-five minutes of language arts. She's a whiz with words. But this morning, she sat stone-faced beside me.

I raised my hand to break the silence.

"Yes, Mariah?" Ms. Spitz said with a grateful smile.

"Straight?" I suggested.

"Good," she said. She filled in the blank and then said, "Let's partner up and see how many verbs and adverbs we can think of for this next sentence."

As I watched her write, my insides tightened. Would Josie want to be my partner today? Then I saw what Ms. Spitz had written: She _____ _____ toward the finish line.

Really? She had to bring up racing? I was sure Josie would turn her back on me now.

But she didn't. "Do you want to write these down, or should I?" she asked, her voice flat.

"You write," I said. "You have better handwriting." It was true. My writing is almost as wobbly as my little sister's, but I'm working on it.

"Okay, you start," she said, her pencil poised over her notebook.

"Um, raced fast," I said, wincing at the words. Couldn't I have come up with something else?

"Walked slowly," Josie countered.

I braced myself for the battle.

"Ran slow?" I suggested.

But Josie was already writing. She added two more phrases: Ran selfishly. Ran alone.

She pushed so hard on the word *alone* that her pencil lead snapped. Her chin started to quiver.

I quickly handed Josie my pencil. "Crawled guiltily?" I said, not even sure if *guiltily* was a word. Then I made my best puppy-dog face.

Josie almost smiled—almost. I could usually get through to her with humor.

"Look, Mariah," she said with a shaky voice.

"If you want to run the mile without me on Monday, just say so."

I shook my head. "I want to run it with you," I said. "Mostly, I guess I just want to try to run it."

"And I don't," she snapped. "I mean, I can't. We never run it, Mari! What's different this year?"

"I don't know," I said sadly. But whatever it was, it was threatening to tear my friendship with Josie apart.

Mariah, what's the matter?"

I'd been sliding my green beans under my pork chop to make it look like I'd eaten something, but my mom was on to me.

"Don't you feel well?" she asked, cocking her head.

"I don't either!" said my little sister, Molly. She pushed her plate away.

"You're fine," I said. "You just don't want to eat your beans."

My sister is always trying to get out of eating vegetables. She crossed her arms and stuck out her lip.

"Molly, eat your beans," Mom scolded. "And Mariah, spill it. What's up?"

I sighed. I can't hide anything from eagle-eyed Mom.

"It's Josie," I confessed. "She says I should run the mile without her on Monday—because I'm faster. She says she won't be mad. But I don't think she really means it." Sometimes Josie's words say one thing, but her eyes say another.

Mom hesitated and then said, "Honey, can you think of something that Josie does really well?"

"Spelling," I said instantly. Josie was the spelling bee champion of our school last spring.

"Right," said Mom. "And how does that make you feel?

I picked at my beans with the tip of my fork. "Sometimes jealous," I admitted. "It comes so easy for her!"

Easily. I could almost hear Josie correcting me. She knows her adverbs backward and forward.

"Right," Mom said again. "But do you want Josie to stop doing well in spelling?"

I tried to imagine Josie actually missing a word during the spelling bee. Her chin did that wobbly thing, which made me want to cry.

"No!" I said with certainty. "That would be weird. And sad. And wrong."

"Exactly," said Mom. "You want your friend to do her best. And deep down, that's what she wants for you, too."

Something was still missing. "Why does she seem so sad, then?" I asked, remembering Josie's face in language arts class.

Mom slid her chair closer. "Maybe," she said slowly, "she's afraid of being left behind."

I thought about that as I tried to force down my dinner. How can I do my best without leaving my best friend behind?

"You want your friend to do her best. And deep down, that's what she wants for you, too."

By Monday afternoon, someone had released a field of butterflies in my stomach. I sat on the bench to calm them down, but my jittery legs pulled me back up again.

"Are you nervous?" Josie asked. She sat on the ground, stretching out her legs in front of her. She'd been super sweet all day. Was it because she was still hoping I would run with her?

"I'm nervous," I admitted. "Are you?"

Josie shrugged. "It's not like I'm going to win it," she said. "I just hope I don't finish last." Worry clouded her brown eyes.

"You won't be last," I said. But how could I be sure? When Josie walks, she's like a movie being played in slow motion.

Thweet! Mrs. P.'s whistle cut through the air. "Line up, girls and boys!"

There are 24 kids in our class and eight lanes on the track, so three of us stood single file in each lane. I stepped behind Noah Swanson, who is super tall.

Josie fell in line behind me. I could feel her worried eyes boring into the back of my purple sweatshirt. It's covered in gold stars. They aren't as big and flashy as the one on Anya's T-shirt, but I wore the shirt hoping those stars would put some sparkle in my step.

Thweet! The whistle blew again, and Noah Swanson took off running, his lanky stride sending him to the front of the pack.

As he neared the 100-yard mark, my heart thudded in my ears. Mrs. P. signaled to me, and I took off fast—much too fast—pumping my arms by my sides. This crazy energy ran through my legs, as if they were running all on their own.

I saw Anya coming up behind me, two lanes away. She was wearing her pink T-shirt again. Was it her lucky shirt? Must be, I thought, as she passed me and pulled away.

I lengthened my stride to follow, but as I reached the 100-yard mark, I slowed down. Josie would be starting to run now. Did she want me to wait for her?



I jogged in place, wondering if I should bend over and pretend to tie my shoe. But then I saw Anya's silver star slipping away, and hot determination began flooding my chest. I knew what I had to do. I had to catch her!

I turned on the speed, my feet barely touching the ground and my arms gliding like wings at my sides. I steadied my breathing, finding a rhythm. And then I was beside her.

Anya gave me a "game-on" smile, as if she'd been expecting me. For a moment, she pulled ahead. But I matched my step to hers: left, right, left, right, left, right. And together we sailed right past Noah Swanson.

By the time we'd finished our first lap, Anya's face was beet red. Mine must have been, too. But we kept running, taking strong, steady steps—in perfect time.

The only thing that slowed my stride was passing Josie, who was dragging her feet, her head down. I wanted to pat her on the back or call out, "Go, Jo!" But would that make her mad? Besides, I couldn't speak when I was breathing so hard. So I ran past, hoping she wouldn't look up and see.

When Anya and I were three laps into the run, my legs turned to jelly. I slowed to a wobbly crawl.

I thought Anya would run on without me. But when she saw that I wasn't beside her, she back-pedaled. That pink T-shirt came bobbing right back toward me.

We didn't speak, but together we slowed our pace until I could breathe again. I found my legs, solid



beneath me. And by the time we neared the end of our fourth lap, my energy came back like a cool wave.

"Beat you to the finish?" I asked Anya.

She laughed out loud and took off like a shot.

I flew down the track behind her. When we crossed the finish line—a paper banner that Mrs. P. and her assistant held out—Anya was in front. She tore through the paper first. But I came in right behind that silver star, and that was just fine by me.

"Nice run, girls!" Mrs. P. called. "Cool down, now. Keep walking."

Anya and I walked off the track toward the bleachers. Sweat ran down my face, and my legs had turned to mush again. But I couldn't stop smiling.

"Great job, running buddy," I said to Anya, raising

How can I do my best without leaving my best friend behind?

my hand for a high five.

She slapped it hard and said, "You, too."

So she did speak! And the grin on her face said she was feeling just as good as I was.

But then there was Josie.

I hurried back to the track to watch for her. There she was—doing a half jog, half walk. I was surprised to see her running at all. She must have been really worried about coming in last!

I wished I could help Josie the way Anya had helped me.

Wait . . . could I?

I jogged across the track. "Mrs. P.," I said, "can I help Josie finish? Run with her, I mean?"

Mrs. P. raised one eyebrow. "Are you sure you have the energy for that?"

Suddenly, I did. I nodded fiercely.

Mrs. P. waved her hand. "Go on, then, Mariah. Give it what you've got."

I waited till Josie was closer, and then I jogged up beside her. The scowl on her face said she wasn't exactly happy to see me.

I pulled out my secret weapon: humor. I ran with my knees up in the air like a soldier. I ran in slow motion, like I was stuck in molasses. I ran backward—until I tripped and almost went down.

That did it. Josie cracked up and said, through heavy breathing, "You are . . . so . . . weird."

I grinned. We were back! My friend wanted me beside her, and I was going to do my best to make the rest of the run fun for her.

"Let's make a game of it," I said. "No stepping on the white lines—those are streams of hot lava."

Josie didn't respond, but she picked up her feet



to clear the lines.

After a quarter lap, she started to sink again. I could hear her wheezing. She was trying—she really was—but running just wasn't her strength. Not like it was for Anya and me.

What's Josie really good at? I was still thinking about what my mom had said about my friend.

The answer came right away: Words. She's a whiz with words. And that gave me an idea.

"Josie," I said brightly, "how about if we march slowly toward the finish line?"

She barely looked my way.

But when I slowed down and started marching instead of running, she caught on. Pretty soon she was marching beside me.

It was Josie who threw out the next idea: "Skip . . . straight?" she suggested. She was breathing more easily now.

"Yes!"

We skipped another quarter lap, which was actually hard work—but we both laughed all the way through it.

We crawled crookedly for another quarter lap, until we almost tripped another kid and Mrs. P. said we had to stand up.

And then . . . we were there! We had rounded the bend and had just one short, straight stretch to the finish.

"What do you want to do, Jo?" I asked her.

She didn't hesitate. "Sprint. Super fast."

Really? I thought I'd heard her wrong, but she pulled away from me down the track.

So I took off, too, until I was beside her.

I'd found a way to do my best—and to help my best friend shine bright, too.

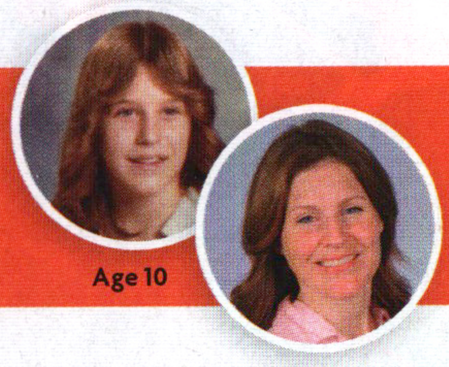
And as we crossed the finish line, I heard someone yelling. It was Anya, cheering us on.

As I slowed to a jog beside Josie, I pulled off my purple hoodie and wiped my face with those gold stars. Right now, I felt like a superstar. I'd found a way to do my best—and to help my best friend shine brightly, too. ★



Meet the Author

Erin Falligant



When I was 10, I was a fast runner, but my best friend was even faster. I had to swallow my pride and cheer her on. Now I volunteer for Girls on the Run and help girls support one another all the way to the finish line.

This or That?

Would you rather . . .

sleep in a tent that looks like a mountain	OR	a marshmallow?
use an alarm clock that wakes you up with disco lights	OR	howls like a wolf?
be a costume designer for your school play	OR	captain of the hockey team?
complete a miniature puzzle	OR	a game of giant checkers?
wear a dress made out of flannel blankets	OR	a hat covered in autumn leaves?
travel to school in a submarine	OR	a hot air balloon?
have a waterfall in your bedroom	OR	a trampoline park in your backyard?
carve a jack-o-lantern that looks like a unicorn	OR	a dolphin?
go to an outdoor movie theater with your family	OR	go stargazing with your friends?
plant your own garden	OR	learn how to knit cozy scarves?
go to school in another country for a year	OR	have an exchange student stay with your family?
make a necklace out of pine cones	OR	a crown out of acorns?

My Parents Only Help My Brother!



Dear American Girl,

My older brother has a learning disability, so he needs help with homework and studying. I get that. But my parents spend all their time helping him and have no time to help me.

Need Help

It's great that you're so understanding about your brother's needs—it makes you a good sister. But you need to let your parents know how you're feeling. They want you to feel supported and to have what you need in order to do well in school. It might help to schedule just-you time with one or both of them that you can use for homework or just to stay connected. That way, they'll be able to give your brother the help he needs and help you, too.

Dear American Girl,

One of my good friends is always talking herself down. She gets really stressed about little things and will say "I'm so dumb" or "I'm such a slow runner," when really she's like the fastest in our class! I don't like hearing it and want to help, but I'm not sure how.

friend

Sometimes people bash themselves in order to get compliments. Do people always say, "No, you're so smart!" when she does that? If you think this is what's happening with your friend, try: "I'm not sure what to say when you cut yourself down" or "Do you really feel that way?" That might help her break the habit. It's also possible that your friend is struggling and not seeing herself clearly. A school counselor might be able to help. It's always OK to talk to a counselor when you're worried about a friend.

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

Dear American Girl,

I saved up to buy a device that's supposed to streak your hair with color. But it didn't work at all. I spent that money for nothing! How can I tell if something is a bad buy?

Bad buy

Information can make you a much smarter shopper. So next time, do research before you spend your cash. Ask a parent to help you look up online reviews of an item you want. Read what other buyers have written about the product—maybe they had a bad experience, or maybe the product is as great as you'd hoped. Either way, you'd have a better understanding of what you were buying. You also can use your knowledge to help other shoppers by reviewing this hair product. It's most helpful to be honest but not mean. (Get parent permission before posting a review.) The truth is, you can't always protect yourself from being disappointed with a purchase. But the more you look into the products you want, the more you'll be protecting yourself and your hard-earned money.

Dear American Girl,

I want to shorten my name to a nickname, but I'm worried my parents will be mad that I don't want to be called by the name they gave me. How can I tell them?

New nickname

You're growing up. Your parents get that—mostly! Tell them what's on your mind, and make the name change with your friends and at school. One thing, though: You might not be able to get your parents (or other family members) to call you by a nickname. They've known you for your whole life by your given name! But don't sweat it. Everyone else can call you what you want.



Dear American Girl,

My schedule is SUPER BUSY. I love all my activities, but sometimes I don't have time for homework. I need advice for keeping my grades up without quitting anything.

Busy Bee!

The key to keeping up is to be super organized. When every day is packed with school and activities, a detailed schedule can help you keep everything straight and help you to be smart about your time. Use a planner, and make a habit of writing down EVERYTHING—assignments, games, practices, meetings, and anything else you need to know. (Don't rely on your busy brain to remember!) When you're busy, it's important to make time to take care of yourself. Schedule time for activities that can get missed when you're busy, including sleep, spending time with family, and exercise. If you miss cuddling with your pet or reading a non-school book, find a spot for that in your schedule! Find a balance that includes those activities, as well as doing your best and learning a lot in school.



Advice from You

Dear American Girl,

I have a friend who won't give me space. She is always waiting for me after class, always texting me, and always inviting me over after school. I need a break and some space, but I don't want to hurt her feelings. What should I do?

Crowded

It's hard when friends get pushy. I suggest that you try to bring this friend into your larger friend group. That way, your friend won't only be looking for you and will have lots of friends to turn to. Good luck!

-maddie

Politely tell your friend that you need personal space. It might also help to set aside one or two days a week to do something together, which would give you time for yourself, too.

-Emma

Tell your friend how you feel, but don't come out too harsh. When you speak, try not to use the word "you." For example, you could say, "I need some time on my own" instead of "You ask me to do stuff too much!" Saying it that way should keep her from getting upset.

-Isabella

If you feel overwhelmed with all the attention that your friend is giving you, you can fix it by telling her the truth. When she texts you, text back, "I'm going to go rest." If you don't want to go to her house, tell her, "I kinda want to spend time with my family right now." If you say it kindly, then it shouldn't hurt her feelings.

-Hallie Claire

I think what will work best is just telling your friend the truth—that you like her and you like spending time with her, but sometimes you need a little time to wind down. She should understand.

-Aster

Help Other Girls!

"I am having trouble with my friend on the bus. I said something that upset her, and even though the problem is fixed, things are still uncomfortable between us. What can I do to make it better?"

Do you have advice to help solve this problem? Or do you need advice for solving your own problem? Send letters to:



BEHIND THE Scenes

Would you like a sneak peek of our costume photo shoot?



Here are some prototypes for the superhero and cat costumes!



This is the makeup artist's sketch for the cat makeup.

The models had a great time together!

Our makeup artist created cool designs for the fairy costume.

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Coming up in the next issue of **American Girl magazine!**



Yay, Crochet!
You'll love making these holiday crafts.

Cute Cakes
Enjoy a treat in a mug.

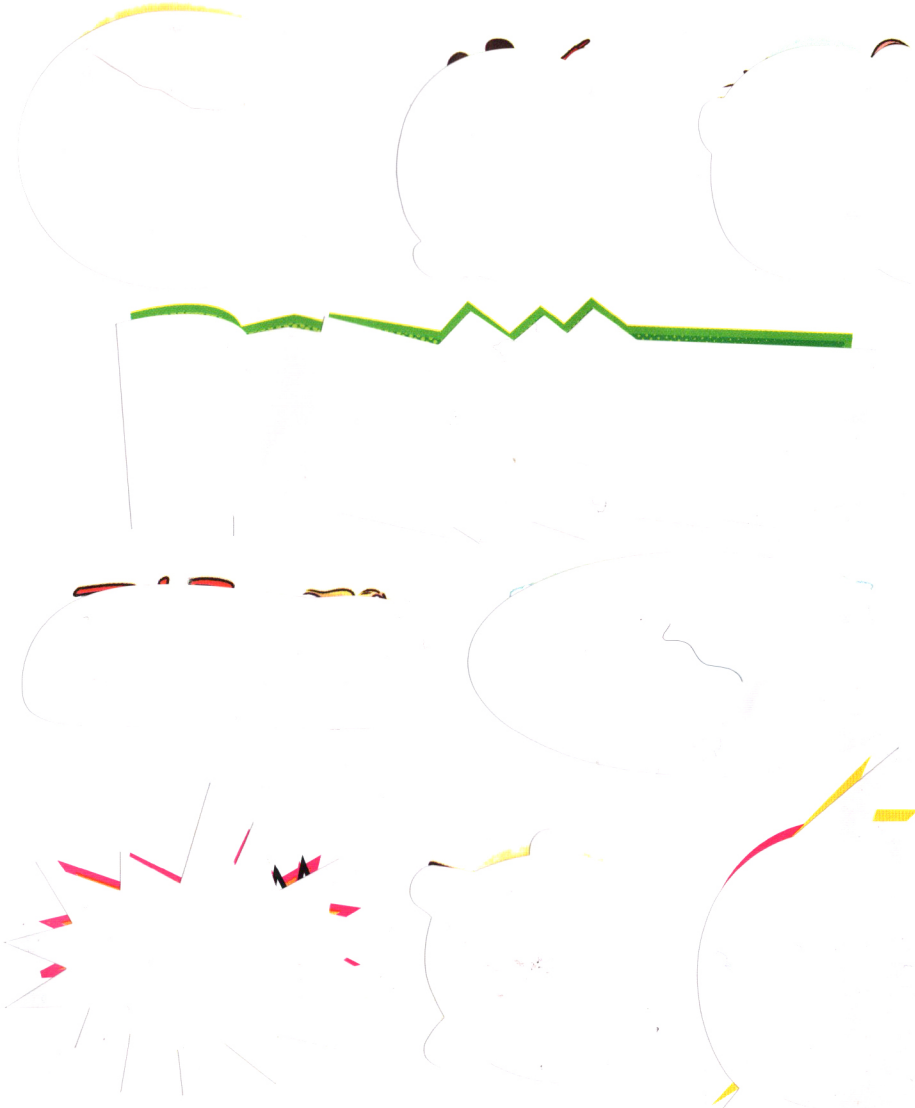
Give Thanks
Try these harvest crafts and recipes to get in the Thanksgiving spirit.

Quiz Whiz
Which breakfast are you?

Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

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Show how super you are with these sweet stickers.



Illustrations: Vera Brosgol

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